

An Example of How Community Participation can be Successfully Incorporated into the Disaster Risk Assessment Process, Aotearoa-New Zealand

Thomas, K-L., Wilson, T.M., Crowley, K., Hughes, M.W., Davies, T., Jack, H.I., King, D.N., Lane, E.M., Johnston, D.M., & Leonard, G.S.

Why involve community participation ?

During disasters, exposed communities bear the brunt of impacts and are first to respond. People of these communities obtain local and/or indigenous knowledge and understanding of **locally-specific challenges and opportunities, which no external expert could derive alone.**

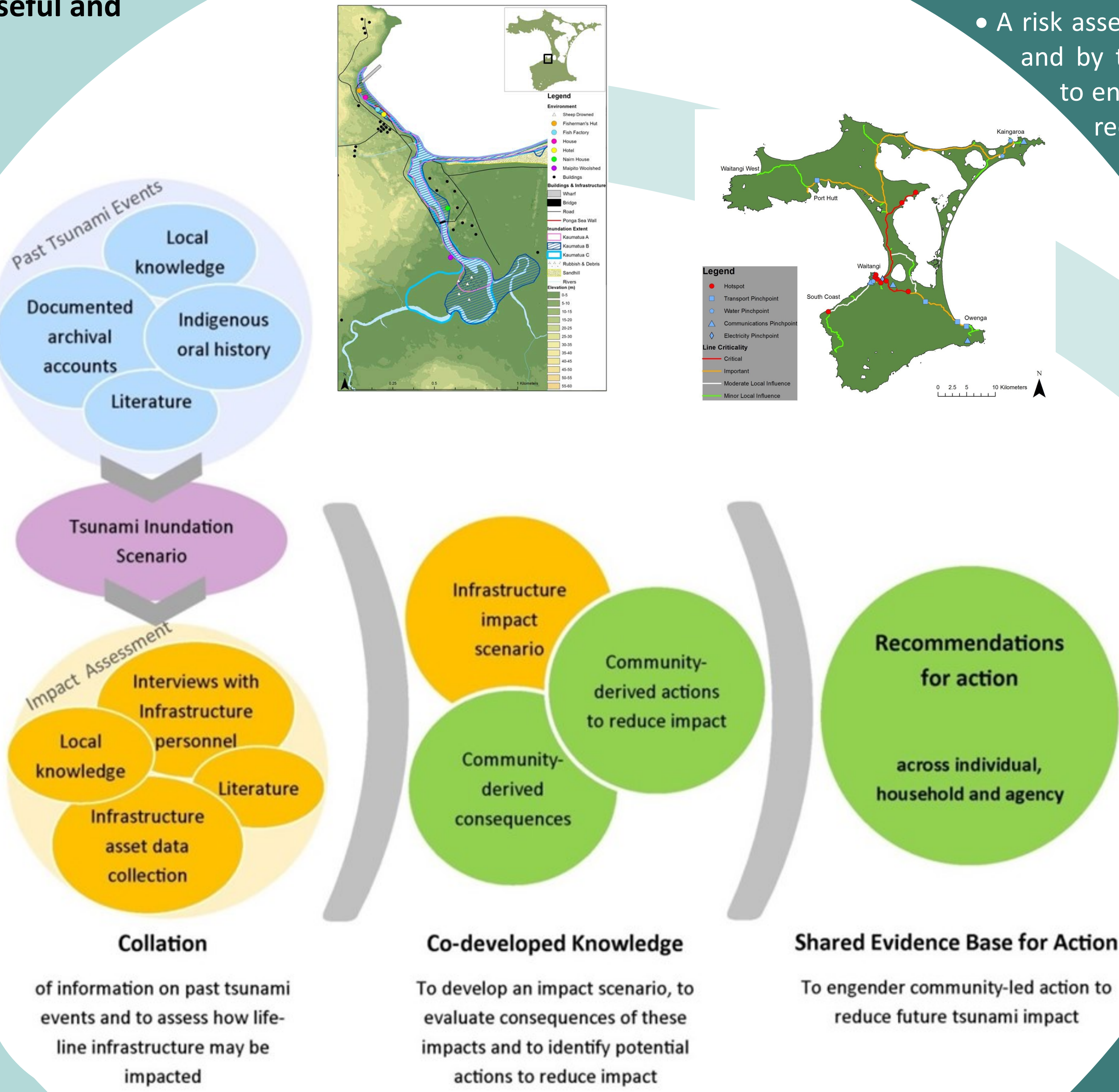
Participatory risk assessments involve participation of people who may be directly impacted by disasters, to:

- encourage sharing of **valuable local knowledge**,
- Produce **understandable, useful and usable results**,
- **empower** community to **reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities to reduce risk**,
- and to form DRR initiatives that are **well-informed** and **invested in** by all involved.

Our Project

- Kristie-Lee Thomas, a Master of Disaster Risk and Resilience student at the University of Canterbury and her supervision cohort set out to assess tsunami risk to her tūrangawaewae [home grounds through rights of kinship, a place to stand], Wharekauri - the Chatham Islands.
- Historical tsunami on the Chatham Islands have been fatal and destructive. But current disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives on the Chatham Islands are limited by uncertain hazard models, lack of understanding of societal assets exposed, their vulnerability (as well as capacity), and potential impacts.
- A risk assessment was carried out for, with and by the Chatham Islands community to engender community-led action to reduce future tsunami impact.

How it was done



Outcomes

- Raised awareness
- Identification of unrecorded fatalities, impacts and areas inundated through Māori oral histories.
- Results helped to justify locations of new evacuation zones
- Raised preparedness
- Infrastructure inventory
- Community-derived actions to reduce risk

Lessons

- Participation by the community in risk assessment processes can provide pathways for the improvement of scientific understandings of hazard, local vulnerability, capacity and tsunami impacts as well as ensuring that this information is shared with, owned by and useful to communities to carry out their own action planning.
- This project highlights the importance of Māori oral histories, local knowledge and local expert judgement.
- This project also highlights the importance of involvement of local researchers who have knowledge of local history, pre-established relationships with the community and are trusted.

What we would do next time

- Organise a workshop to co-develop the tsunami inundation scenario
- Organise a workshop with infrastructure personnel to develop the impact scenario as well as carry out individual interviews to understand each of the networks.
- Allow more time at the end of the project to deliver results.